

The Human Touch

Utah Department of
Human Services
120 N. 200 W.
Salt Lake City, 84103
801.538.4001
801.538.4016 Fax
hs.utah.gov



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and much more!

Director's Message



Lisa-Michele Church,
Executive Director

One of the outstanding things about DHS employees is their commitment to excellence. It stems from the critically important work we do on behalf of others. Thank you for all you do to rise above the limitations in resources and serve Utahns.

I have spoken several times about the high degree of professionalism that is expected in DHS. Because our mission is to protect vulnerable children and adults, we need to have a system that is ethical and above reproach. We take our Conflict of Interest policy seriously. We take our Code of Ethics seriously. Both are enforced. Clients expect us to be focused on their needs, not on our own personal gain. Sometimes that makes it a more difficult job and I appreciate all your efforts.

These standards make us a stronger system, and they give us credibility with the public and the legislature. They need to know that we have case-workers and administrators who are

careful, thoughtful and compassionate, while always respecting professional boundaries.

I have found in my first year on the job that it is extremely hard to accept the amount of human misery that we see every day with some of our DHS clients. It is for this reason I am especially proud of the extra efforts staff have demonstrated to make the Holiday Season a little better for our clients. Once again, you have shown meeting people's needs are more than just a day-to-day job.

As you read this issue of the Human Touch you will learn about some of the many projects our staff have initiated or coordinated across the state to benefit their clients. All around the state in our DHS offices, you have made the Holidays a little brighter for some of Utah's most vulnerable citizens. Thank you for your extra efforts. I hope you enjoy the best that this season of the year has to offer!



Decker Lake Tree (p.6)

Cars, Sunset & Iraq

What could cars, Sunset and Iraq have in common? Youth and staff from the Davis Area Youth Center (DAYC) that's what!

Pinewood derby cars were made for children in Iraq by youth at the Sunset, Utah DAYC. Jason Polad, Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) staff member thought the cars could help Utah soldiers in their peacekeeping mission in Iraq. Lucas Lumber and the Boy Scouts of America provided wood and wheels.

DAYC youth used the grounds-keeping workshop at Antelope Island Park to build and paint the cars. The youth expertly used cutting equipment, then sanded and painted 25 cars. They did double duty by making wooden airplanes while waiting for the painted cars to dry. The cars and airplanes will be given to children at Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake, Toys for Tots in Ogden and children in Iraq.

By Davis Area Youth Center Staff

Sgt. James Manchego of the 142nd Transportation Company of Ogden will give the cars to Iraqi children. During the convoys the children often gather around the soliders in the safe zones. One on one contact will be enhanced with the gift of pinewood derby cars from the youth at the DAYC.

"It's cool that kids from Iraq will get to play around with cars that we made!" One youth said.

Congratulations to the youth and JJS staff involved; Jason Polad, Patrick Savage, Teresa McDaniel, Jill Merritt, Lorelee Gacioch and Ted Groves.



"The best day I've had on my job was ..."

As told to Catherine Taylor by Recovery Services employees:

"When I was hired 20 years ago; I got to have a career that has been exciting for me in every job I've had at ORS."

"When I tracked down the source of an accounting error; it took two full days and resulted in an improved accounting process and saved the agency a couple of hundred dollars."

"Staffing an information table at the Single Mom's Conference. The 'Thank you's' from the mothers whom we've helped mean so much. The stories of how their lives have been changed by being able to depend on support coming in makes me feel good about what we do."

"I realized as a manager that it was not only being productive on projects, but also the interaction and building up those we work with that counts. One day, I was able to give mostly positive feedback to people I supervised. I could tell many were very pleased to hear something positive about what they are doing, and it felt good to me to give the feedback."

"Since I no longer work cases directly, it is easy to lose touch with the human element behind what we do. Recently, I received an e-mail question from a single mother. The question happened to relate to a project that had been consuming a great deal of my time without visible return yet. I answered her questions, but took a chance and ended the e-mail with a brief description of what I was working on. I asked if I could send her additional information when it was ready. We e-mailed back and forth several times throughout the rest of the day as she asked more questions and offered suggestions from her point of view. I left that day, completely recharged from the best day at work in recent memory."

"Christmas Eve 2003 when I handed a Custodial Parent \$30,000 in child support. The criminal prosecution group had worked diligently to get payment for child support. We actually received the payment to disburse on Christmas Eve Day. The mother was able to spend that day shopping for her children."



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Warm Hands

By Div. of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Staff

To take a young person by the hand
For even part of their journey
Through this big and ever-changing world
Is to give that young person
A better and happier today
And an even more promising tomorrow

For all the lives that you've made
More meaningful and warm,

Thank You.
(Author unknown)

State Youth Action Council members and Division of Substance Abuse/Mental Health (DSAMH) staff give warmth to Utah's youth by decorating their Christmas tree with hats, gloves, mittens and blankets in support of the Council's project.

The State Council includes youth representatives from six community mental health centers. "These representatives advise DSAMH on youth-related issues and keep youth concerns in focus," said Jane Lewis, program manager. Council members will distribute the hats, gloves and blankets to needy children and youth as their service project.

Regional councils also are working on service projects. The Weber County Youth Action Council is making 30 fleece quilts for children at the Ogden Christmas Box House. Wasatch's Council is collecting food for Utah Food Bank by setting up boxes in various Utah County locations. Also, Davis, Valley, Southwest and Four Corners Councils are serving their areas and all send representatives to the State Council.



Tis' The Season for Stress and Celebration

By Chuck Diviney, DAAS

All right folks, it is that time of year again- "The Holidays". As employees in the Department of Human Services, we focus on providing care and support to many of Utah's citizens, helping to create safe and supportive communities.

However, we may forget to take care of ourselves. There are always several articles on "what not to do's" in order to reduce stress this time of year. Let's focus a moment on "what to do" to take care of yourself.

It is fairly common for us to declare New Year's resolutions, but this year consider setting goals for ourselves any day of the year, not just one. Also, spend time doing the things that create happiness. For instance, spending time with family, buying that new outfit you wanted for months, taking a long walk, stretching for 10 minutes or hibernating in your favorite place for awhile. Personally, my favorite is staying in bed for a day and watching movies (something I love to do on New Year's Day).

Whatever you choose to do, be kind to yourself. Don't forget the wonderful work that you do for others and that you have earned some time for you.

Celebrate YOU During the Holidays!

'TIS THE SEASON

By Pamela Russell, Div. of Child and Family Services



Northern Region TAL Coordinator Sarah Pomeroy visits with a client.

The Transition To Adult Living (TAL) initiative has been on everyone's mind this year, and the holiday season is no exception. Many DHS employees are preparing "Move-In Kits" for youth who are transitioning to live independently as young adults.

What makes this so remarkable? DHS employees spend their daily work lives supporting families, and yet many are willing to go the extra mile to provide youth these necessities, realizing many youth do not have families to provide that very support.

Every year an average of 184 youth leave foster care to live on their own as adults. It is a stressful and difficult time. By providing "Move-In Kits" we make this transition less difficult. These kits contain essential items such as bath towels; alarm clock; blanket; pillow; dishes; cookware; silverware; kitchen utensils; glasses; cleaning materials; and household tools such as a hammer, screwdriver, etc.

For the past two years the TAL initiative has been working on making recommendations for improved services for adolescent youth. This collaboration with youth, agency and community partners, and private organizations has not only increased awareness, but provided an unique opportunity for everyone to come together to serve youth as a community. The TAL initiative has evaluated and made recommended services in the areas of housing, medical/mental health needs, education, vocational, and relationship building for youth.

Youth are an integral partner in this initiative. The development of the www.justforyouth.utah.gov website has been a great source of information for youth across Utah. This website is widely used by youth and service providers, with an average of 664 unique hits every month. The web site is a great source of information for all youth, not just those in foster care.

With the increased awareness nationally on this young adult population, Utah is a leader among the 50 states in recognizing the importance of collaboration and teamwork. The entire community is working to prepare youth for their journey into adulthood. Thank you for doing your part during this holiday season.

Recognition Idea

Remember the buddy system? It teaches us to never go it alone. On the mountain, this rule saves lives. In the office, it saves agencies.

Through recognition, employees share the task of spreading your agency's mission, vision and values throughout the organization. They illustrate the agency brand, vision, values and strategy through their everyday activities and priorities. They live it. They embrace it. And they teach it to each other through example.

So you don't have to do it all alone.

And that's an incredible benefit, because second only to their direct supervisor, employees most value recognition and direction from their peers.

Recognize: Because the agency you save may be your own.

(Adapted from, A Carrot a Day. Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton)



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Deck The Halls

By Liz Sollis, Div. of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

The holidays can be a difficult and trying time for those struggling with a debilitating mental illness, especially if they lack family support. Utah State Hospital has operated "The Forgotten Patient Christmas Project" for 40 years. The project is designed to bring joy and gifts to patients that have literally been "forgotten" by their own families. For these patients, the thought that someone would care enough to give a gift or write a note to them reminds them that they are remembered and they do matter.

"The Forgotten Patient Christmas Project" has had a positive impact on many people's lives. Several sponsor families have made the project an annual tradition in which they annually receive general information about the patient, including clothing sizes, hobbies, favorite candy, and a wish list with three or four items that the patient would like to receive. Once sponsors have purchased the gifts of their choice, they wrap the items and are then encouraged to write notes, cards or letters to their patient letting them know who has provided Christmas for them. The gifts are collected and are taken to the units on Christmas Eve. Everyone opens gifts together on Christmas morning.

This year, the halls of Utah State Hospital are not only decked with gifts for the patients, they are also decked with hundreds of Santas. Rick Hendy, Program Administrator, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental, loaned his time and love of Santas to the Children's Unit of the Utah State Hospital – resulting in a fun and bright line-up of over 1,000 Santas.



When asked which Santa the children liked best, "the Grinch" was the winner time and time again. There are four Grinches in the Santa lineup and the children love walking down the hallway, looking for the Grinches and talking about all of the different Santas – old, cute, Mickey Mouse, Bugs Bunny and, of course, Grinch! In the midst of all of the Santas, the one thing that brings the most joy to children is the opportunity to answer the age-old question, "What do you want for Christmas?" When answering this question, their joy is ever-present, thus decking the halls with hope, happiness...and Santas!

The Best Day of the Year!

By Donna Russell, EDO

"It's the best day of the year to be a caseworker!" exclaimed Wendy Garcia of Clearfield, Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). "It's hard to say who is happier, children receiving the gifts or the caseworkers delivering the gifts", continued Wendy.

DCFS staff assure children who are in foster care or receiving in-home services have unexpected gifts delivered in time for the holiday across the state. Staff accomplish the "Christmas Elf" tasks in addition to their regular caseload responsibilities. Community groups and businesses generously provide many, many gifts for the children.

In Clearfield, DCFS Permanency Workers, Wendy Garcia and Stormey Goddard coordinated holiday gifts for 225 children in foster care or receiving in-home services. "Citigroup is providing gifts for 150 children in Davis County!" Wendy said. Wal-Mart provided for another 50 children and Hill Air Force Base personnel volunteered to support another 20 children. Gifts also came from youth under Davis County Court supervision in a unique partnership with the Juvenile Probation office. The youth are allowed to provide gifts for children in lieu of paying fines to the court.



Pictured (left to right) are Permanency Caseworkers: Stormey Goddard, Wendy Garcia, Dawn Jones, Amy Young

IN GIVING WE RECEIVE

Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) staff and youth worked all year to create and donate three trees to the 2005 Festival of the Trees.

Genesis Youth Center's "Rainbow of Life" tree is dedicated to Jennifer Baldwin, a Genesis employee who passed away this last year in a tragic car accident.

JJS counselor, Tracey Timothy began in February coordinating Genesis youth and staff after a tour of the 2004 Festival of Trees sparked interest. Over the past year youth, staff and volunteers have worked together to create the garden themed tree and display.

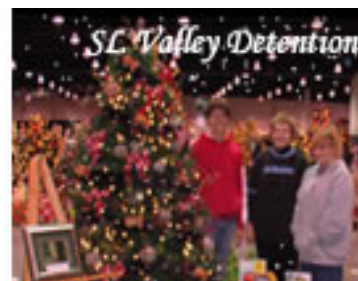
Jordan School District provided on-site woodworking equipment, construction training and financial help. Both female and male residents built the tree. The tree skirt, an original design by Tracey was started in February and finished the week before the Festival. Many hours and many hands resulted in a display the youth were very proud of. "The greatest experience was watching the excitement of the kids working on the project," said Tracey. She and her team are already planning for next year.



Decker Lake Tree



Counselors: John Oliver, Tracey Timothy, and Supervisor, Chris Roach



Lonny Burton, Vol. Coordinator
Polly Gregson, Counselor
Tori Hoggard, Counselor

Decker Lake's "Wooden Wonderland" tree is a remarkable one of a kind wooden tree. "The entire tree was designed, cut from oak and finished with a walnut stain. The star on top was cut from maple wood and accented with a clear finish," said Director Curtis Preece.

Fifteen boys started with a pile of rough and unfinished boards and under the guidance of Mark Hadnot, Woodshop and Social Studies teacher, began constructing the tree. First, a pattern was drawn on butcher paper, the boards measured, marked and cut; then came the sanding, shaping, drilling and staining.

Next, the students and teachers worked together on the complicated assembly, delivery, setup and decorating at the Festival of Trees. David Nelson, Math, Science and Computer teacher, and Susan Stevens, Art Teacher, headed up the preliminary setup, wrapping boxes and tying perfect bows with help from Mary Voelker and Suki Cannon of Granite School District.

Then Bonnie Shaw, English and Drama Teacher, Susan, and a whole host of teddy bears, went to work decorating the tree. (Adapted from Granite District YES Newsletter).

"We are so proud of this tree built by our youth and staff," said Preece.

By Lisa Schauerhamer, Juvenile Justice Services

Salt Lake Valley Detention's "Play – The Road to Success". This tree is dedicated to long time director and friend, Keith Smith who died of Leukemia last September.

"The tree represents the components of what a child needs to succeed. Keith was always a huge advocate for the kids in our care and reminded staff often that they were kids" said Lonny Burton, Volunteer Coordinator. "We are thrilled to be part of a service that gives hope to so many children."

Lonny also commented, "So many of our kids in detention have missed basic things that children should experience for fun and play growing up and making this tree was a chance to 'play'."

The Play Themed tree displayed toys donated by the Happy Factory, a non-profit organization that makes toy cars to donate to children in impoverished countries. The wooden cars provided by LDS volunteers were stained by the youth. Residents and staff made each ornament by hand.

"It is always fun to see our kids get so excited at being part of something that truly gives back to the community", Lonny said.

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Lisa-Michele
Church, Exec-
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Edited by
Donna L.
Russell

Layout by
Rich Rayl
120 N 200 W
SLC, UT 84103